

CABINET STATEMENT

TITLE: NEGOTIATIONS WITH TRADE UNIONS

DATE: 3rd November 2010

BY: Leader, Councillor Russell Roberts

Under Cabinet Statements, I would like to take the opportunity to provide Members with an accurate position, in relation to our negotiations with the trade unions.

Following the decisions made by Council at its Extraordinary Meeting on October 13th the Trade Unions were “formally” invited to engage with the Council to explore the options for dealing with the reductions in funding we are set to face.

Whilst formal engagement has only started recently the Trade Unions have been involved in discussions around the likely impact of the funding gap we expect as a consequence of the UK Government’s Comprehensive Spending Review, from as early as June this year. We were, therefore, extremely disappointed when the GMB Union decided to conduct their negotiations through the media. This really is not helpful causing needless worry to our staff with the GMB suggesting that they were all going to lose their jobs. **This is simply not true.**

We have embarked on a review of terms and conditions of employees, to try and avoid the need for compulsory redundancies and in turn, protect hundreds of local jobs within the Council. This remains our paramount objective. We are therefore extremely disappointed by the stance of the GMB.

Importantly the other trade unions that represent our workforce remain engaged with Officers and are working with us to find solutions, to avoid the need for compulsory redundancies.

For clarification, the reason a formal letter was issued to the Trade Unions, was to formally start the process of consulting on terms and conditions with them, as required by law. The letter also sets out the reasons why the Council has to look at these issues. The GMB was

made aware, well in advance that such a letter was to be issued, and this letter in no way issues the threats suggested by GMB.

I reiterate that the section 188 letter to the Trade Unions, does not mean that there will be compulsory job losses. Indeed, the object of this exercise is to negate or reduce the need for compulsory job losses

I have personally extended an invitation to GMB to return to the table and engage with us in seeking ways to address the challenges, forced upon us by the UK government, in the interests of protecting important local jobs and essential frontline services, a view that I am sure all Members here tonight fully support.